

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 05374 231059Z

ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 SSM-05

OPR-02 SS-15 PM-05 SP-02 L-03 /063 W

-----015105 231305Z /41

R 230952Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4530

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 5374

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, SY

SUBJ: FUTURE PAN AMERICAN PLANS FOR SYRIA/LEBANON

1. REGIONAL PANAM REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM HAMAD VISITED EMBASSY ECONOFF TO GIVE BRIEF UPDATE VISIT PANAM REGIONAL MANAGING DIRECTOR KURKJIAN TO BEIRUT (APOLOGIES OF THIS DUPLICATES BRIEFING GIVEN AMBASSADOR PARKER). KURKJIAN AND HAMAD SPENT SEVERAL DAYS IN BEIRUT, SAW PRESIDENT SARKIS, TALKED TO LOCAL PANAM STAFF AND SAW WHAT HAMAD DESCRIBED AS WIDE SPECTRUM BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT IN LEBANON, PRESIDENT SARKIS LEANED VERY HEAVILY ON KURKJIAN FOR PANAM TO RESTORE SERVICES TO BEIRUT NOT ONLY FOR BUSINESS REASONS BUT ON HISTORIC AND SYMBOLIC GROUNDS. SAID THAT PANAM AFTER 30 YEARS OF PROFITABLE SERVICE TO LEBANON SHOULD NOT NOW STAY AWAY WHEN GOING IS A LITTLE BIT ROUGH. SARKIS ALSO EXPRESSED COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN SECURITY OF AIRPORT, OF ROAD TO AIRPORT AND OF CITY OF GEIRUT IN GENERAL. KURKJIAN DID NOT COMMIT HIMSELF PRO OR CON BUT DID MAKE COMMENT TO SARKIS THAT IT WOULD BE A POOR SHOW FOR PANAM TO FLY IN ONE 727 WEEKLY WHEN IT HAD BEEN OPERATING ALMOST 20 747'S AND 707'S A WEEK THROUGH BIA.

2. HAMAD SAID THAT PANAM SINCERELY FACES TWO PROBLEMS.

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HON IS KOS NOT SHARE PRESIDENT SARKIS'S CONFIDENCE IN SECURITY OF BEIRUT AIRPORT AND ITS APPROCHES, AND TWO PANAM SIMPLY LACKS THE ASSETS IN AIRCRAFT OR IN ROUTINGS TO BE ABLE TO RESUME A BEIRUT SERVICE AT THIS TIME. SARKIS SUGGESTED THAT PANAM CHANGE ITS FLIGHT FROM DAMASCUS TO BEIRUT, BUT THIS WAS OBVIOUS NON-STARTER. KURKJIAN SUGGESTED TO SARKIS THAT A PERSONAL APPEAL TO

SECRETARY VANCE WHO HAD BEEN ON PANAM BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MAY SUCCEED WHERE EVERYTHING ELSE FAILED.

3. PANAM INTENDS TO INCREASE ITS CAPACITY  
TO DAMASCUS. PRESENTLY ONE 727 COMES FORM FRANKFORT-  
PRAGU WEEKLY. POSSIBLY SARTING IN APRIL 1978 PANAM  
WILL OPERATE TWO 707'S A WEEK, NEW YORK-ROME-ISTANBUL-  
DAMASCUS-REST OVER NIGHT AND RETURN.

KURKJIAN INTENDS TO RETURN REGIONAL MANAGING HEADQUARTERS  
FROM TEHRAN TO BEIRUT AS SOON AS SITUATION PERMITS.  
HAMA WILL ALSO MOVE REGIONAL OFFICE FROM DAMASCUS TO  
BEIRUT AT THAT TIME.  
MURPHY

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**TAGS:** ETRN, SY, LE, PAN AMERICAN AIRWAYS  
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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
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